The Benefits of Interactive Whiteboards in Primary Schools

An Internet Hotlist on SMARTboards in Schools

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Introduction

Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs), including SMARTboards, are being used in increasing numbers of schools around the world, as educators recognise their benefits to teaching and learning.

Over many years the shortcomings of students using computers as learning tools have been identified. Educational researchers decry the slow take-up rate of new technologies in many schools; and time 'wasted' when computers sit idle in classrooms and labs. Unreliable computer hardware and software equipment mean the quality of the information and communication technologies (ICT) teaching program is adversely affected. Teachers are reluctant to plan and teach ICT lessons when a number of vital pieces of computer equipment may be out of use or performing poorly.

SMARTboards and other IWBs have a huge advantage over individual computers and computer labs for incorporating ICT into teaching. For the first time, teachers can 'e-teach' a class of students, rather than relying on students 'e-learning' ICT skills while working 1:1 or 2:1 per computer. This makes an IWB a very effective tool in student learning.

This Hotlist of web site links has been compiled to educate teachers on the benefits of using IWBs in primary schools. Many sites include links to further information, including examples of interactive lessons designed for use with a SMARTboard.

Note: To keep this Hotlist open while exploring the links provided, hold down the shift key then click on a link. This opens it in a new window, allowing the Hotlist to remain active as a window and meaning you can easily return to it when required.
The Internet Resources

Part A: Setting up an Interactive Whiteboard

- **SMARTboards: Interactive Whiteboards in Classrooms, Peter Kent, 2004** - This document is written by the deputy principal of a school that has an interactive whiteboard (IWB) in each of its 11 classrooms, plus the library. The school actively promotes IWB use in 'e-teaching'. The article includes instructions on using a SMARTboard to its greatest advantage for teaching and learning.

- **Interactive Whiteboards: A Powerful Learning Tool, Sep/Oct 2003** - This document, written by two American educators, is a short summary of issues surrounding the use of IWBs in schools. It includes an outline of the procedure required in setting up IWBs in schools.

- **Using Interactive Whiteboards** - A web site that outlines possible uses of IWBs in schools. It gives practical information on health and safety issues associated with using projection equipment.

Part B: Educational Benefits of IWBs for Teaching and Learning

- **What the Research Says about Interactive Whiteboards, BECTA, 2003** - This paper begins with a brief description of the components of an IWB, along with its educational uses and benefits. It describes itself as a 'snapshot of the current research literature' and includes comprehensive references to further reading.

- **Interactive Whiteboards and Learning: A Review of Classroom Case Studies and Research Literature, 2004** - This document is produced by SMART Technologies, the company who make SMARTboards. It is a summary of the identified benefits of IWBs in classrooms; including student engagement, providing for varying learning styles and catering for students with special needs. It has an excellent reference list with links to further information on IWB use.

- **Interactive Whiteboards and Teaching, October 2004** - This web page is produced by a company promoting the use of IWBs in schools. It highlights the role the teacher plays in using the IWB, from 'just' a whiteboard to a digital convergence facility; and outlines the implications this has on student learning. This site emphasises the need for ongoing teacher support in developing ICT and IWB skills, and includes links to further reading.

- **Interactive Whiteboards and the Journey to 'e-teaching', Peter Kent, 2004** - This short article describes the whole school strategy undertaken by Richardson Primary in the implementation of IWBs in classrooms. Kent describes the benefits to teachers and students of 'e-teaching', including student motivation, engagement and educational achievement.

- **The Educational Effects and Implications of the Interactive Whiteboard Strategy of Richardson Primary School: A Brief Review, 2003** - This document reviews an Australian research project investigating IWB use in schools, emphasising the ability of IWBs to immerse students in ICT use. The article includes anecdotal interviews...
with teachers, parents and students, highlighting their perceptions of the benefits of IWB technology for student learning.

- **Teachers Tell their Story: Interactive Whiteboards at Richardson Primary School, June 2004** - This article focuses on the impact IWBs have had on teachers and teaching at one school. Findings include: * IWBs enthuse teachers and inspire them to teach 'smarter' * IWBs are an effective tool to enhance student learning * Teachers become more creative and include more lateral thinking in lesson design * Students can gain immediate feedback on their work * Teachers can effectively model research skills. The report emphasises the need for ongoing research into the impact of IWB use on student learning.

- **The Digital Whiteboard: A Tool in Early Literacy Instruction** - This is a summary of one teacher's journey through introducing and using an IWB with her class for the purpose of teaching early literacy skills. It includes descriptions of processes used and skills gained by students through the use of a SMARTboard.

**Part C: Further Reading and Lesson Samples**

- **Getting the Most from your Interactive Whiteboard: A Guide for Primary Schools, 2004** - This comprehensive article provides practical advice about IWBs; including their effective use in classrooms and research evidence of their benefits. The key feature of this technology is identified as being its ability to be used for whole-class teaching, including modelling, demonstration, probing and questioning; and involving students in visual, aural and kinaesthetic modes of learning. It includes sample lessons across a range of key learning areas.

- **National Whiteboard Network - Review and Implement, 2004** - This British web site contains information on the use of IWBs in teaching, including FAQs and a Help site on SMART Notebook files for use with a SMARTboard. It includes links to documents on the ICT learning environment, and learning and teaching using ICT.

- **Finding and Using Digital Resources with an Interactive Whiteboard** - This easy to read web page provides teachers with ways to effectively use digital, interactive web sites in their IWB lesson preparation. It outlines what to look for when searching the Internet, and contains links to copyright laws and guidelines for creating effective resources.